Not Another Psychiatrist

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Not Another Psychiatrist

by AtticusCrete

Summary

First meetings, for Hannibal it's a happy revelation, for Will it's the mildest form of torture! Oh why oh why, did he have to be a pscychiatrist?

Welcome to the Dr Plushy Pants AU where there is humour, tenderness, familiar faces, different deaths (squee), and some angst, corresponding fluff, slow burn, and divergences (Franklyn lives!). Watch for tags for each chapter/part. Canon adjacent. Maybe a second cousin twice removed - some events out of sequence.

It spans beyond the three seasons, and starts with 'a terrible name for a Museum', I've written bits from along the timeline. The ending of the whole series is already written. I'm currently going back to fill in the gaps.

And sorry about the titles, I'm rubbish at titles, and summaries, and notes, *shrugs* in my first four weeks of writing I clocked just under 100,000 words, what can I say? Feedback and friendliness gratefully received. I answer all comments, though it can take me a bit of time.

In real life I'm an archaeologist, and have other things I'm supposed to write and read. But I'm always delighted to hang out here...

Chapter 1

'Bev, Bev, Be-ve-r-ly, come over here, quickly'

Will hissed at Beverly and beckoned her to join him in a corner behind some file cabinets that were being used as room dividers. She crowded in.

'What? what is it Will?'
'Did you see who went into Jack's office?'
'What, no, who?'
'It's Alana's friend. From the party, yeah, you know, the one with the cheekbones. What's he doing here?'

'Ah, right' said Bev 'hmm, yeah. Sorry. Jack mentioned him this morning. He's a doctor'
'yeah, so?'
'Of psychiatry'
'Oh....shit, is this about...?
'Yeah, it might be. Sorry Will, I'm not quite sure what Jack's got in mind'
'probably someone in my mind' Will grumbles.

'I'm so bad with psychiatrists. Alana wouldn't even be friends socially for two years when we first met because she was so fascinated with how I adapt to her personality. I don't do well with people trying to understand how I feel about how I'm thinking. Oh god, why couldn't he be here for something...' he trailed off.

'Will, come in for a minute. There's someone I want you to meet.' Jack beckoned Will towards his office wondering why he and Beverly were crowded in together behind the cabinets. There better not be anything going on there or there'd be trouble. He better be worth it.

Beverly whispered 'good luck Will, text me later'.

He glanced back at her and grimaced as Jack ushered him into the office in front of him.

Be patient

Chapter Summary

> Bedelia hears of Will Graham for the very first time. Does she experience any degree of foreboding? Does she heck. Pass the bottle.

'So, has anything unexpected occurred in your recent patient interactions?'

'Not particularly. They continue to face what I might choose to name as the malady of their living affluent lives, in an affluent state, in an affluent nation at the beginning of the 21st century'

'Ahh, first world problems?'

'It might be unprofessional of me to characterise them thus, but broadly, yes.'

'And how do you feel about that?'

'I sometimes question my purpose in continuing to enable behaviour which it might be possible to describe as neurotic. I regularly find that my notes have a sad degree of repetitiveness. I am unfortunalty blessed with enough self knowledge to appreciate that this may well be due to my therapeutic approach rather than some inherent trait of theirs.'

'You encourage dependency?' Bedelia recognises this sentiment herself. It's one she experiences herself in her own analysis of her patients. Patient. After all, she currently has only one. One rather persistent one.

She quite likes Hannibal but she's clear in her own mind that what he presents to her is a kind of facsimile of himself. She wonders sometimes if she gives this partial version of himself what he at least partially needs.

He expresses a degree of refined flamboyance. He carries it with his European idiolect, his clothes, his manners, and way of just, being. He prefers structure and order and seems to appreciate control if not in others certainly in himself.

She asks herself whether he has ever mentioned someone else by name. She knows he is a patron of the arts, is involved charitably, has a wide and successful practice, holds extravagant dinners and parties (though she does not attend, apart from the annual Christmas Party, a highlight of the social calendar not to be missed), and regularly appears at other events and occasions.

He sometimes attends with another female psychiatrist she knows, but although Bedelia assumes they are on friendly terms she's reasonably sure that it is nothing more than a

convenient arrangement albeit a pleasant one. She wonders briefly if he is lonely. He is certainly frequently alone. By choice or not.

Almost because she has thought it, or so she reflects, he stands, and goes to look out of the window (she knows he does this perhaps subconsciously perhaps as a deliberate marker he hopes she will observe) and remarks

'I've met someone new this week. I was asked to meet with a new profiler at the FBI to provide a base line to report his future behaviour in the field against.'

'A profile of a profiler'

Hannibal smiles tightly 'indeed'.

'And how was that?'

'It was unexpectedly interesting, although I rather fear the man was coerced by his superior into attending a meeting between the three of us. He was rather articulate in his annoyance.

He has an extraordinary degree of empathy. It makes him rather troublesome I understand. Though he apologised rather nicely at the end. A previous set of bad experiences with several different and diffident psychiatrists I understand.

He made it clear he would hold me to a high standard. Though he was partially mollified when he discovered we shared a mutual friend in Dr Bloom. I find myself looking forwards to meeting with him further. For all his sense of frustration it was one of the most stimulating exchanges I've had over the last 12 months. I find myself rather delighted by the experience.'

'I have been under the impression that you loathe rudeness. Has something changed?'

Oh, I despise general anonymous discourtesy and depersonalised rudeness certainly. I am not changed in that regard. But I found his specificity rather refreshing. This Will Graham. It has given me much to think about'.

'On that, we have reached the end of your hour. Perhaps you will open the wine?'

Bedelia gestures towards the sideboard where a bottle of red wine is resting with two glasses and a corkscrew. Hannibal liberates the wine and they give a silent toast.

Bedelia thinks 'well, there's a thing. I wonder what will become of Will Graham. A nasty brutish job, rather stressful. Interesting. And how very surprising of Hannibal. Oh dear.'

Hannibal thinks 'there we are then. I've told Bedelia.' He mentally ticks it off his 'to do list'. Will Graham officially exists in his life outside of his own mind. How exhilarating.

Is that to go sir?

Chapter Summary

Beverly, Will, Hannibal and a cafeteria ....

'Is that a coffee? It doesn't look like coffee?'

'Sorry hun, they're doing some kind of special this week so you get the seasonal blend with a free muffin and I want your muffin'

'Couldn't you just have used my money (wallet back, please and thank you, no don't rifle through it, Beverly!) and bought me a proper coffee and a muffin?'

'Where's the fun in that? I wanna see you get cream on your nose, or a marshmallow up it. Either will do. I'm not fussy'

Will shakes his head. Something of this order always happens when he and a Bev go for coffee in the middle of the day. She uses his money to buy him something awful in the name of a good deal (it's not a good deal if you don't want half of it! And not everything cheap is a bargain!), and he eats the consequences. Or drinks them. It depends on the deal.

He tries to take a sip of his drink and both of Bev's hopes come true. He grimaces, she snaps a photo. It's par for the course.

'How's it going with Jack?'

'I'd like to say it's fine. I don't dislike him. I just recognise his particular brand of ruthlessness. If I'm still standing in six month's time tell me to retire. Or something. Resign maybe. Emigrate.'

'You are very good at what you do, even if it, you know...'

'I do know, both of those things. And I'll do it as long as I can. However long that is. But I'll stop before it kills me. Probably.'

'I'll tell you. If you want me to. If you're going completely off the rails'

'How would you know?'

'You'll tell me. Or you won't argue about the muffins one week and I'll know you're doomed'.

Will knows he's luckier this time round. Last time it got out of hand he had to take six months off the Louisiana Police Department with PTSD. Mandatory counselling didn't work until his

frustrated therapist took to going fishing with him. Over the six months the psychiatrist decided to give up his practice and become a fishing therapist instead and Will recovered enough to go back into law enforcement.

That time he didn't really have anyone on side to nudge him, take him out for beers, or generally haze him in a genuinely humorous way. This time, he's been adopted by Team Sassy Science, Alana's his friend. And he has a new psychiatrist he doesn't hate. Ok. Cards on the table? He might even have a teeny tiny crush on.

'So, I met the delicious doctor at the Museum Opening. What did you think of him?'

'Dr Lecter? After I got over being ambushed by Jack, it was alright. I quite liked him< /p>

'and the rest?' Bev manages the lewdest wink he's ever seen. It's like the wink version of a huge nudge in the ribs, several times, until you're bruised, and you've a cracked rib.

'yeah. Alright. I thought he was pretty gorgeous, but do you know how illegal it is to date your doctor? So, not going there, no side, I'm crazy, not stupid.'

'what can I say Will, the heart wants what the heart wants. He has a mighty fine booty'

'you leave his booty out of it'

'oooh jealous! It's a bootiful booty, all lush and lovely'

'Beverly! Shut up! I'll have to sit opposite him next week thinking of you singing about his backside'

'Dr Plushy Pants. The Delectable Doctor, Dr Unbutton, himself' Beverly croons to herself as Will does the adult version of sticking his fingers in his ears and saying 'I'm not listening, I'm not listening', which is to stick his fingers in his ears saying 'I'm not listening, I'm not listening'.

He's not listening to the extent that he doesn't hear Beverly greet the good doctor currently walking towards them across the cafeteria.

'have you stopped talking about my trick cyclists delectable derrier or whatever it was you were singing?'

Beverly makes the kind of face that is universally translatable as 'hey guess what, the person we were just talking about is standing right behind you looking bemused. I'm relying on you to come up with something because my brain just went into lock down. Good luck with that friend, see you on the other side'

Will is rather good at saying the wrong thing, but hey, he just has so he reckons the only way is up. 'Dr Lecter. Hey. How nice to see you. Are you here for Jack? I was just being very positive about our first meeting. You've met Beverly Katz haven't you? Do have a seat. Can I get you a drink?'

'thank you Will, that's very kind. An Americano please.'

'cookie? Muffin? Anything edible?

'I believe I am currently content with my level of sweetness'

Will obligingly chuckles and heads off to the queue, turning to make a face at Bev, behind Hannibal's back, that says 'you utter shit, help me out here'.

Hannibal smiles at Beverly, 'are you between case? I can't imagine you get much down time?'

'That's true, we don't really, but it's a Thursday so we had to come for the special' Beverly indicates the board behind the counter of the cafe.

'and that holds some appeal?'

'god no, not really but I'm compiling a great album of Will being defeated by hot drinks and food. Have a look.' She thumbs her cell phone and opens the relevant file. There are maybe ten photos of Will in varying degrees of food related unfortunateness. Hannibal smiles.

'what it is to have friends who would serve us so well.' He smiles at her.

'I know, right? What's the saying "a good friend will help you move house, a great friend will help you move a body!"

'one can only hope'

'actually really that happens quite a bit in our line of work'

They both smile at that. Will comes back with a cup of coffee in a china cup and saucer.

'did you want that to go? I'm sorry, I should have asked.' Will sees the phone sitting beside Bev's mug, he looks at her sharply and mouths 'you didn't?' She smiles blandly back.

'So, Dr Lecter are you here for Jack?

'actually no. I'm here to ask Will if he'd like to come for dinner next week? Maybe after your session? Do you have any dietary needs?' he says addressing his remarks first to Beverly and then to Will.

'ok. Wow. That's nice of you. I might be a bit weirded out by the session. You know. Depending on how it goes. But great. Thank you. No dietary needs, though I'm not fantastic with organ meats and offal is to me as it sounds' they both look at him blankly 'ok, ok, offal is awful, see what I did.. never mind' the other two smile and then laugh. Will rolls his eyes. 'No ganging up. You barely know each other. This is why I avoid therapy.'

'I'm sorry Will. I can't turn it off any more easily than you,'

Hannibal smirks, Beverly responds by saying

'sorry, sorry you're just so easy to wind up sometimes. It's like a gift, hard not to open'

'isn't this where I go grumble grumble?'

'not at all, I think it's here I say thank you for the interlude and thank you for accepting the invitation. ms Katz, bracing as usual.'

Hannibal smiles at them both and takes himself across the cafeteria and out the double doors.

'don't say a word Bev. Just don't'

'What? I was only going to say he really has got a great arse'

Does it take one to know one?

'So, are you going to meet with him properly? I need to know you're alright out there you know?'

'Jack, I've already told you I'll go, I'll talk to him, I'll make nice. I promise, your beauty sleep is assured, stop worrying. It'll be good to have someone to go over things with. You don't have to persuade me.'

'You've changed your tune. I thought you didn't want any psychiatrist messing around in your brain?'

'I don't. But I think he'll be ok. I liked him. I think he might even help. But if he doesn't I'll tell him. We'll try and come up with something that works for me and works for you. I'm going to see him next week and we'll establish some kind of shape to how it's going to be. And if I sound nervous, wouldn't you the first time you met with someone who wants to know your brain inside out. It's anxiety making. Surely you can see that?'

'Yeah Will, ok, but you better be on the up and up. I'm taking no shit from you over this or anything else'

'Jack, I don't understand you. You wanted me in the field, I'm in the field. You wanted me to see Dr Lecter, I'm seeing Dr Lecter. You wanted me to work with the team, I practically live with the team. What am I not doing that you want from me? I don't know what else there is. You seem to think I behave in certain ways just to antagonise you. I really don't mean to. If I'm under stress I'm going to be stressed. I'm not being deliberately stroppy. Can you not see that?'

'Just make sure you pull your weight, now get going I've got to go and see someone else'

.....

'So, Dr Lecter, what beautiful presentation. What am I about to put in my mouth?'

'Rabbit'

'He should have hopped faster!'

'Yes he should!'

'It's quite delicious, I do appreciate this you know. I know it's above and beyond really'

'Not at all Jack, you are simply seeking reassurance about a man you employ, who has a history of struggling when in the field. Your concern is not surprising. And I know the case you are working on brings its own pressures quite apart from the extent to which good Will is able to make progress on it. And if I can have a new friend for dinner at the same time, well that's just a bonus.

'I spoke to Will this morning, he says you have arranged to see one another next week. Is that right?'

'it is. In fact I have already met with him, though not formally. We happened to encounter one another in the cafeteria. Where we confirmed arrangements. He was with Ms Katz.'

'what a surprise. And are you under the impression that there is anything going on there, if you catch my drift? They behave very, well I don't want to colour any impression you may have.

'they are newly acquainted?' Jack nods 'in that case I think you may be blessed with some great good fortune. Ms Katz has taken Will Graham under her not inconsiderable wing and he is being warmed along with the other members of that science team. They make a formidable and amusing combination. Ms Katz has a very appealing sense of humour.'

'I was thinking more along the lines of an office romance or affair?'

'oh. I see. No, I don't believe so'

Hannibal has to pause then. For all that he would rather like to be able to categorically state that there can be no such understanding between Beverly and Will he can admit they would be an entertaining couple, perhaps full of humour in public and quiet passions in private.

As he thinks this to himself he knows utterly that he is projecting, if he were to describe the shape of any intimate relationship in his own life it would have something of those qualities. As well as others, perhaps less comfortable to think about in the presence of the head of the BAU.

'I think, that on reflection, that I can see no cause for concern in that direction. Have you found them to be difficult in collusion with one another?'

'oh. No. not in particular, I just like to head things off at the pass if I can. I hope you'll feel able to give me a heads up if it looks likely to derail any work?'

'if and when it is appropriate or desirable I will be sure to consider such a matter'

Jack smiles, glad to get his own way. Doctors can be tricky about patient confidentiality.

It is only some time later that he realises that Dr Lecter didn't actually agree.

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That evening Hannibal considers the dynamic between Will Graham and Jack Crawford. He thinks back to the description of Will that Jack first furnished him with. He had not been able to recognise Will from it either at a distance or after the first few occasions interacting, either in the flesh, by text, voice mail, or email. He plays again the voicemail he received from Will earlier in the day<>

*hey, this is Will, Jack says he's having dinner with you tonight. Sounds good. Ok. You know he's a red wine guy? The heavy stuff. He thinks white is for girls! (Ouch, don't pinch, I didn't

say it, he did, oww) Irrespective of the meal. Beverly says hi, and something I don't understand about pumpkin pie latte?? I think she might be angling for a drink with you? Ow. She says that's not what she's doing. Oh. She thinks we should all go for a drink, well, ok. Hannibal do you want to come for a drink with us. She's saying Sunday (why Sunday Bev? Oh, lucky you) Bev has Monday off so she says Sunday. We shouldn't let her bully us. Please be on my side? Would you like to? It'll be her and me and the bros, and maybe Alana. Not sure. text me or leave me a voice mail. Bye (ow, Beverly I asked him t) he's cut off half way through a word.

When he heard it first he had been greatly entertained. Now he is charmed. He's gone so far as to save it in an undeleatable file. Everything he knows or has experienced of Will first hand has been pleasing. So how is it that Jack has a very different view? Maybe there is something in Will's personnel file to which Jack is privy and he is not.

Though he does have the doctor's notes on Will. When he asked Will to sign a consent to share document, Will had sounded at first miserable and then resigned. 'I just want to say that those notes cover a period in my life when I was absolutely at rock bottom. Of course they don't have all the good stuff in, you don't tend to go to the doctor and say hey treat me, I'm incredibly happy, content, satisfied and fulfilled. I have those periods too you know, well you won't know from these notes. Though I liked my final therapist'

and indeed the final therapist who treated Will during six months of gruelling PTSD noted that Will for all his stress and sorrow was at heart a man with clear vision, a deep centredness, patience and compassion, all traits that the therapist and he experienced together as soon as the doctor stopped tying to get him to talk and simply spent time with him, mainly fishing by the looks of it.

Hannibal looks at the cell phone again. He calls up his diary. In theory he should go to a meeting in the early evening, Sunday being the only day when everyone on that board isn't already overwhelmed by engagements of one kind or another. Maybe he could join them later? He hums and hahs, he would consider it rude if someone were to cancel at this late a date. Though there are no refreshments involved.

Goodness. Is he about to cancel an engagement for the sake of pumpkin latte with a patient and his patient's work mates? When he thinks of it like that he is further entertained and decides to say hang the board (would that he could) an evening of entertainment wins. He rolls his shoulders. Given his varying life choices this is exceptionally daring of him. He texts

*Will, I'm grateful for the advance warning on Jack's preferences. Fortunately I had anticipated this (next time 24 hours notice please! I beg of you) and cooked accordingly. Ms Katz seems a most amusing acquaintance, I can only imagine the proliferation of bruises you have since becoming her friend. A Sunday engagement seems propitious, might I enquire when and where, or is it to be a treasure hunt? Warmly, Hannibal Lecter *

there. It is done. He hopes Bedelia would be proud. Certainly as a therapist he would be delighted if any of his patients acted so out of character in the interest of furthering their enjoyment of the world.

.....

'hey Bev'

'what, I'm trying to cut up this pizza, it's got stuck to the tray'

'get Jimmy to help'

'that's why it's stuck! What is it anyway?

'have a look at this text, I think this is Dr L saying yes to Sunday night. Wow. I didn't expect that. Did you?

'you're kidding right? Let me see. Shit. That's psychiatrist for 'yeah that sounds fuckin ace I'm in'. Well he's more fun than the three pieces suggest. Now, are we going to ask Alana or not?

'can we eat the pizza first before we decide?

Uncomfortably numb.

Chapter Summary

A bar, a floor, a face full of more floor, a bed, a cup of coffee, and another dead person. Just a normal day in Will Graham land.

Will is lying on a bed in Dr Lecter's Baltimore home. Ostensibly he has drunk too much. No one would let him drive back to Wolf Trap. Fucking hell. He's lying on a bed in Dr Lecter's home. His mind does a little static buzz. Fucking hell. The room slightly spins if he opens his eyes. So it's better if he doesn't.

The overhead light is still on, so he forces himself to roll over and off the bed. On the floor he is able to struggle to the wall and reach out and switch it off. It's now comfortably dark. He feels 'comfortably numb' he smiles to himself. Still punny, oops funny. Maybe he could just stay where he is.

There's a short knock on the door and Hannibal pushes the door open. Both he and Alana are standing there illuminated by the light of the hallway beyond. 'Will?'

'Down here. Floor. It was nearer.' Will turns his face up to them but doesn't open his eyes. Eyes tell you too much, reveal too little. Is that a burst vein? Do you have hepatitis? Are those whites really white? Eww? He's not sure if he's spoken aloud. The short silence suggests he might have. 'Sorry, sorry. Don't know what came over me, sorry.'

Alana and Hannibal exchange a brief look and he pulls the door to behind them as they step back into the hall. 'Is this unusual behaviour for Will? There're nothing in his file to mention alcohol abuse.'

Alana grimaces 'No. I've never seen him drunk before. Maybe the occasional beer with me, or he might have a finger of scotch, or wine if he's pressed. But it may be the case Jack has him on. The Shrike? Those girls in Minnesota? He doesn't do well with stress in the field. But usually, well..'

'Well, what?' Hannibal asks carefully, Alana is Will's friend and has made every effort to stay out of his extraordinary mind in a professional context.

'Usually it takes a sustained amount of stress in the field for it to show up in his behaviour. Last time, when he was in the PD he was working cases for nearly two years before anyone realised what was wrong. This time, it's what, the second case Jack has him looking at. That's fast.'

'You think this is a response?'

'A few years ago I thought he was exhibiting signs of distress and instability. I spoke to the departmental chair, after an investigation, which mind you lasted for four months, it transpired that there were a trio of trainees making his life hell. They'd basically done a mixture of gaslighting, bullying and a mixture of physical and psychological terror. It was horrible.

It ended up with Will wearing a wire and his home, office and classrooms being connected up with cctv. But he'd spent two months thinking he was going slightly crazy, then another two months getting anyone to listen and then four months of investigation.'

'That sounds terrible. There is nothing of it in any of the files I've been asked to review. Will hasn't mentioned it either.'

'He will. He's up front about it. He usually uses it as an example of investigator paranoia in one of his lectures. It shook the FBI academy up somewhat. The three trainees were all dismissed, two of them were charged with actual bodily harm, one of them got custodial time. But the point I'm failing to make is that his stress never exhibits in alcohol use. He becomes extremely introverted and withdrawn, but not acting out in this way.'

'Which is why you think it's the case, or a combination of factors?'

'Well, sometimes when someone keeps treading a particular path it makes it hard to take a different route. I don't mean the alcohol. I mean that it used to take a while for his brain to process the stress but now it's got a clear highway, so it acts much more quickly on him'

Hannibal considered Alana. This argument wasn't without its merits. And he simply didn't know Will enough to be able to determine the cause.

The evening had been immensely enjoyable. The group had met at a large cafe bar late on Sunday afternoon, they'd eaten together, talked politics (nooooooo!!!!), religion, art and music, they'd talked about holidays they'd taken, good books, film.

Hannibal reflected that it was a little like a first date in terms of content, public-ness, humour and tone. Or maybe a second date, where the participants had decided there was something worth pursuing first time around.

He'd happened to catch Beverly Katz's eye at one point as though she had been assessing him with her head just slightly tipped to one side. She hadn't seemed embarrassed to be caught out in her scrutiny and it had amused him.

They had all drunk possibly slightly more than was sensible, Beverly exulting in her planned time off the following day. Alana was due to stay with her overnight and they were heading to New York in the late morning. Jimmy and Brian had arranged some kind of visit to Jimmy's twin who lived in the city, they were due to meet him just after 11:30. It was possible that Jimmy was trying to manoeuvre things so they didn't all meet his brother.

Hannibal has successfully divested himself of any guilt at the arrangement he made to miss his board meeting. He muses briefly on the way in which board rhymes with bored. How true. Sometimes.

Will had seemed completely fine all the way through the evening. Right until the end when they were all going their separate ways, Jimmy's brother having finally arrived. He had been amusing, engaged, involved in the conversations, making good eye contact, exhibiting absolutely none of the tells one might expect of someone who was about to morph from entertaining companion into a near dead drunk.

He'd gone to the rest room and come back and practically fallen over. At first it had seemed as though he'd tripped. Briefly Hannibal had wondered about some narcotic use. But he genuinely seemed just drunk. The whole group seemed taken aback. But some hasty arrangements were made. Alana would go with Hannibal and Will, and drive to Beverly's later. Bev, Jimmy and Brian would depart as arranged.

Now though. 'Hannibal, he couldn't have taken something could he? I mean, I don't think he would but could he?'

'He wasn't showing any signs but it isn't always possible to tell just from a visual survey'

'Are you alright if I leave him with you, I don't want to be too late at Beverly's? If you think he'll be ok, I don't want to leave you in the lurch'

'I anticipate he will be fine; time, a pain killer and water will probably be all that the situation requires. You should go and not worry. If anything changes I will of course text you'

Hannibal walks down the stairs from the guest room to the front door with Alana. He waves her off as she drives away. As he walks back upstairs he hears a door close up on the third floor, hopefully marking the end of an enquiry not the beginning. He waits to see if anyone descends to the second floor as he waits for a few moments on the landing. But no one comes.

Back in the guest room Will has discarded his jacket and hung it on the back of the escritoire chair, he has also successfully folded his shirt and pants and placed them on the same chair. His shoes are placed neatly underneath it, lined up in parallel.

'Will?' Hannibal is very quiet. If Will is asleep he doesn't wish to disturb him.

'I'm not asleep. I'm sorry to have been trouble. I don't know what happened.'

Hannibal sits on the end of the bed as Will pulls himself up slightly, under the covers. He's wearing a tee shirt, probably an undershirt. 'Can you describe it?'

'I was just sitting there and then I thought it'd be a good idea to go to the rest room before we all left. And when I was coming back just shaking the excess water off my hands I felt like someone just threw me on the ground. No warning or anything. When I was on the floor it felt like I was being held down. Suffocating me. I could feel its breath in my ear. The tickle of feathers. It snorted. And there were horns or antlers or something.'

Hannibal is silent. This is an unexpected turn of events. Will is here in the house. He has been subject to a violent hallucinatory experience. He is still shaken. This is an opportunity.

'I would suggest that this might be a stress response but do you think it feels like one to you?'

'What, you're not going to tell me what I feel?'

'No. I am genuinely interested in knowing if you have an explanation'

Will considers and slowly says 'I was going to tell you this week when we meet, but I had a bad go with some trainees a few years ago. They were doing stupid things, just to mess me around, the over empathic lecturer lets see how far we can push him before he falls over. Surprisingly far actually. Though I did fall over.

Anyway, I'll tell you about that properly another time. Yeah yeah (he sees Hannibal's expression) I'm completely up front about it, it was a good lesson, is a good lesson for other trainees and agents. But what I mean is that stuff happened that I couldn't explain, and gradually I felt like I was going mad. Stuff being put in my head, losing time, gaslighting. Actually it was just these three guys. But the feeling is the same. Something so out of my control it makes me feel like I'm in free fall. I don't know what happened. But I felt suddenly really really drunk. Like I'd been adding shots to my beer, the stupid things college kids do.'

'Could someone have spiked your drink?'

'I don't think so. But I don't know. I mean, why would they? That's why it feels like those three guys. It just seems so unlikely. What's the point? Those guys were just mini psychopaths in training, but what would be the point here?'

'The only difference in outcome for the evening that I can see is that you have ended up here rather than having gone home. But I hope you will believe me when I say I haven't drugged you!'

Will chuckled 'I do believe you. Don't worry. I think you'd be more direct in your manipulations. Sorry, that sounded worse than I meant. I just meant I think you're pretty honest with me, about intentions and so on.'

'I certainly like to think so. I'm glad to have even a measure of trust' he held up a hand before Will could speak 'I said a measure, and I meant it. I know it will need to be earned. I doubt a certificate in a frame would be enough to convince you. I am slightly wondering about the advisability of taking a blood sample to be tested just in case.'

'Wow! That got serious fast! I'm sure I'm going to be ok, I already feel a bit better, and the room isn't swimming unless you've got two awful armoires and not one?'

'Never the less. Lets not rule anything out. How are you with needles?'

.....

Later that night Hannibal goes up to the third floor. He knocks quietly on a door. When it's opened a woman slips out of the room and closes the door behind her. Hannibal looks at her intently 'did you drug him?'

He doesn't add anything further but waits for a response, the woman shrugs 'we wanted to see what would happen. You've mentioned him twice. You never mention people. We wanted to see him up close. He seems very pleasant. It's nice that he's here'

'He is pleasant. I like him. Please don't drug him again, not even for my supposed benefit. You should go back to sleep. Is she asleep?' He gestures at the door.

'Oh yes, like a baby'

.....

In the morning when Will wakes up he feels both a faint hangover like ache in his forehead, a sting in his elbow, and just the faintest frisson of something. He's still in Dr Lecter's bedroom. It all went a bit pear shaped last night but he is still here.

Not all bad then? God he was turning into an optimist. That was Bev's fault. She'd call this an opportunity not an embarrassing episode. He sees his jacket on the back of the chair and leans out of the bed to reach his cell phone in his inside pocket. He snuggles back into the pillows, wow it's comfortable.

He sees there are a couple of texts from last night and one this morning. The two from last night are basically 'hope you're ok, you were shit faced. Hope you didn't do anything stupid. Love you' and from this morning oh god it's Jack another girl been taken. He looks at the time, it's what Will sometimes thinks of before fuck o'clock, i.e. What any reasonable person would think was an ok time to wake up their sleeping companion with a surprise blowjob or friendly poke. Shit. He'll have to go. Hopefully he can find a paper and pen to leave Hannibal a message.

He hops out of bed and rubs his arms. Surprised initially that there is a small bit of cotton wool micropore taped to the crook of his elbow. Then he remembers, Hannibal took a little blood to test. In case. What? That he was drugged?

He gropes for the shower and stands under it for five minutes, just enough time to wash away sleep and most of his hangover. Though it doesn't feel like a real one. Whatever.

He has the faint stirrings of a morning erection and he just lets that feeling swirl around as the water cascades over his head. He thinks of Hannibal sitting on the end of the bed last night and his cock does a happy little bounce. Yeah. Ok. He likes his psychiatrist. He hopes that last night's turn won't have alienated the good doctor too much.

Out of the shower and back into last night's clothes he wonders where his car might be. Oh yeah. Near the bar district. Ok, he can get a taxi or uber it. Really he should go straight to the airport. Has he got his drivers licence? Yes. Ok so he should call Jack.

'Hey, I've got your text where should I go? Ok? Now? Oh. Ok? I'll see you there then.' Didn't go as badly as he expected. And he's got a couple of hours as they couldn't get onto an earlier commercial flight and the jet is being used by someone else today. Will wouldn't put it past Jack to call it back but it's already over the Midwest and it'll be quicker to fly civilian.

He's also sending a car to get Will, so that's worked out. He didn't say anything about the address when Will told him. Maybe Jack doesn't know it. Actually Will wouldn't know it except there was letter headed paper on the escritoire in his room.

He picks up his shoes and goes quietly out of the door and then down the stairs. In the front hallway he hesitates. He can hear music coming from further inside the house. It feels a bit rude to intrude but it might be worse just leaving. He follows the noise and finds his host in the kitchen making coffee and yawning over a newspaper.

'Did I wake you up with the shower? I'm sorry if I did. Do you need to be up this early? And hello, and thank you for looking after me'

'Will. Hello. You look better this morning. How did you sleep'

'I slept fine, thank you. My head is a bit muzzy but it's alright. I'm still none the wiser. Are you really going to get a blood test done?'

'I think we should, just to be sure. Are you alright with that?'

Will just nods and accepts the cup of coffee Hannibal hands him. It's a surprise seeing Hannibal in pyjamas and a robe. His hair is looser, messier. It's a good look on him. It revives Will's earlier interest (not now boner, he thinks). He says out loud 'you look good like this. I like the whole suit thing but this is very fetching too.' He takes a slurp of coffee and when he looks at Hannibal he is rewarded by seeing Hannibal blush and look slightly flustered. Will smiles at his coffee.

'I take it you are up and dressed this early because there is somewhere you have to be?'

'Yeah. I spoke to Jack. Another dead girl. Well, another missing girl. I'm just waiting for the car to show.'

'Do you feel well enough to travel?'

'I seem to be fine. Slightest headache, but apart from that. I don't even feel a sense of impending dread. But that might be because I'm here. And I slept really well. Despite the whole fall on face business. Still it means you know what the deal is. As your patient I mean.' Will drinks some more coffee. Even the coffee is good. Damn.

'Yes. I do. Well. A better idea. Will you be back for our session on Thursday? Or will we have to re-schedule?'

'I think we might have to reschedule. But I'll have a better idea once I'm out there. Shall I text you? I've got your number'

'Please do that sounds like a good compromise'

.....

'I asked them "How's the cat?" Which wasn't the kindest thing I could have said in the circumstances and then it turned out their poor little girl was upstairs, she'd been returned. It

turns out she is ill, was ill. Horrible for her, horrible for them. But I've got a clearer picture now I think'

'Did Jack tell you he has asked me to join you? He will be in court for the next few days and I think he sees it as an opportunity for us to get to know each other more'

'Ok. Sounds alright. Just don't be too chirpy in the mornings. Or I'll loathe you really fast.'

'And I'll apologise for that, and other things and you will get bored of the apologies, so I shall use them sparingly'

'Yeah. Alright. Probably true the other way round too. What time will you get here?'

'Probably about six. Do you want to meet? We could have a discussion about the case and share insights.'

'Yeah. That sounds good. Have they put you up in the same motel?' Hannibal is quiet at this 'shit they've put you up somewhere nicer haven't they? Well. Good on you. Can you steal me the little toiletries and extras, I love those shower caps, I use them on the soles of my gum boots to keep the trunk clean after.... ok you don't need to know. I'll see you at 6:30 or so. Or shall I meet you at the airport?'

Hannibal has a moment of feeling rather elated, and enjoys imagining Will waiting for him in arrivals and then being delighted to see him. Really he's being quite ridiculous about the profiler. But why not? 'Would the airport be too inconvenient? It will save me having to get a hire car'

'Great, that's a good thought, saving the government dime, spend it on a nicer hotel instead! Excellent plan. See you later then' he thumbs his cell off. 'What?'

'Will Graham, was that you flirting with that nice psychiatrist of yours?'

'Jimmy! As if I would? He's coming up this evening. That'll be fun.'

'Has he got the blood tests back?'

'Shit, I meant to ask him'

'Is he going to be on the same flight as Bev?'

'Oh, I don't know, when does she get in?'

'This evening, about seven I think'

'No Hannibal will be on the flight before I think, sorry, Dr Lecter'

Jimmy smiles at him and pats his arm. 'Boy, you've got it bad. Can't say I blame you though.'

Will smiles at him. 'Come on we've still got stuff to go through before our lord and master arrives'

'You mean Bev don't you?

'Of course'

They bump fists. In the way of middle aged geek men everywhere.

How's the cat?

Chapter Summary

The day before the morning after..

'So. Jack asked me about you and Hannibal'

'What, when?'

'In the car, earlier, before he went. Turned out he wasn't asking what I thought he was asking! Good job I got him to clarify before I launched into my 'love will find a way even in the FBI' thing.'

'What? What are you talking about Bev. I haven't had enough sleep ever for this?'

'Ok. So, workplace relationships are a no? Right? The whole Mano et Mano, Girlo et Girlo, also a bit of a no, although in theory we're all drop dead liberal, right? Ok, I know we all are - I mean, one het, one and a half maybe more gay, one bi-bi baby, one pan, and the interns who are their own gender and sexuality thank you very much, that's harrassment just to ask (apparently, sorry, didn't mean to be rude), that's like a parade all our own in this department alone! Anyway I have this sort of speech worked out, originally it was for Preller (Will frowns, so before he can ask she's says) Jimmy and Brian, keep up, but now it's just there in case. Actually you're a no brainer cos you're the Academy not this department, and Dr L is consultant! So we're fine, or rather, you are'

'Beverly. He's still my doctor. Ok. And that is illegal. Not just against the company policy.'

'Babe. Are you still on the books?'

'Semi officially'

'Any money changing hands?'

'No. I think it's more chats for access than cash for access.'

'So then?'

'I think Hannibal thinks of me as his patient.'

Beverly just falls around laughing, so much that other people in the bar look over at her.

'Sweetheart, Will, precious baby (he looks properly pained now) have you not seen how he looks at you when you're not looking?'

'Obviously not. How could I? Then I'd be looking at him? S'not sensible'

'Ok. Right, we're going to set ourselves up in this bar so you can see the mirror, right?'

They swop seats.

'So were you there so you could keep an eye on things'

'Of course'

'Oh.'

'So what was he asking?'

'He wanted to make sure you were keeping your appointments with Dr L'

'Good job you clarified before you launched in then'

Bev grins 'still got the talk ready you know' she winks.

.....

In the bar later on Brian, Jimmy and Hannibal have finally turned up. Once they've all got drinks, Beverly angles to sit next to Hannibal with a good few people between her and Will. She doesn't want him to overhear.

She starts off 'So, Dr L. Jack asked me about you and Will'

'Indeed, to what effect, today?'

'In the car, earlier, before he left. Turned out he wasn't asking what I thought he was asking! Good job I got him to clarify before I launched into my 'love will find a way even in the FBI' thing.'

'Ms Katz? I think you have lost me before we have even begun?'

'Ok. So, workplace relationships are a no? Right? The whole Mano et Mano, Girlo et Girlo, also a bit of a no, although in theory we're all drop dead liberal, right? Ok, I know we all are - I mean, one het, one and a half maybe more gay, one bi-bi baby, one pan, and the interns who are their own gender and sexuality thank you very much, that's harrassment just to ask (apparently, sorry, didn't mean to be rude), that's like a parade all our own in this department alone! Anyway I have this sort of speech worked out, originally it was for Preller (Hannibal frowns, so before he can ask she's says) Jimmy and Brian, keep up, but now it's just there in case. Actually you're a no brainer cos you're a consultant and he's the academy. So we're fine, or rather, you are'

'Ms Katz. I am still his doctor. And we have strict guidelines. It isn't just against the company policy.' He smiles to soften the words somewhat.

'Is he still on the books?'

'Semi officially'

'Any money changing hands?'

'No. The intention is to offer support and even friendship through our conversations. And to be able to make suggestions to Jack, Agent Crawford' Beverly grins.

'So then?'

'I think Will thinks of me as his doctor.'

Beverly just falls around laughing, so much that others look over at her.

'Oh Dr L, Hannibal, oh my, (he looks rather pained now) have you not seen how he looks at you when you're not looking?'

'Clearly not as you have. One cannot see what one is not looking at, it's a logical impossibility

'Yeah right Mr Spock, Ok. You see how I've set ourselves up in this bar so you can see the mirror, right?'

Hannibal glances up momentarily just enough to see where they are located in relation to the mirror behind the bar.

'So you can keep an eye on things?' Hannibal asks Beverly.

'Of course'

'Oh. I see. Hmm. So what was Jack actually asking?'

'He wanted to make sure you were keeping your appointments with Will'

'Perhaps it is useful that you clarified what was required before you expounded?'

Bev grins 'still got the talk ready you know' she winks.

.....

Will, Jimmy and Hannibal are having a lively conversation about antlers and antler velvet and myths around deer as shamanic creatures. As they do so Beverly happens to see Hannibal shoot a particularly enamoured look in Will's direction. Will isn't looking at him, but he blushes and stumbles over his next sentence. He flushes so prettily Bev wants to pat him. He saw the look in the mirror.

Later, as Beverly Brian and Hannibal are conversing, Brian animatedly throwing his hands around, Will is looking adoringly at Hannibal. So much so that Jimmy nudges him. 'You'll burst!' Will nudges him back and they both laugh. Will looks it again in Hannibal's direction. This time Hannibal catches it directly, and smiles straight back.

Bev smirks to herself. The old mirror trick. Works every time. God. She's everybody's fairy godmother. Where's her tiara and wand then eh?

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